

SEARCH STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Step 1. Write your research question.

To develop a good search strategy, your research topic or question should be condensed into a single succinct sentence, not too broad or too narrow.

Step 2. List the types of literature that may contain useful information for your topic.

Step 3. Isolate the main concepts of the research topic and write them in the top column of the table below.

Step 4. Build a list of relevant/useful search terms for each concept.

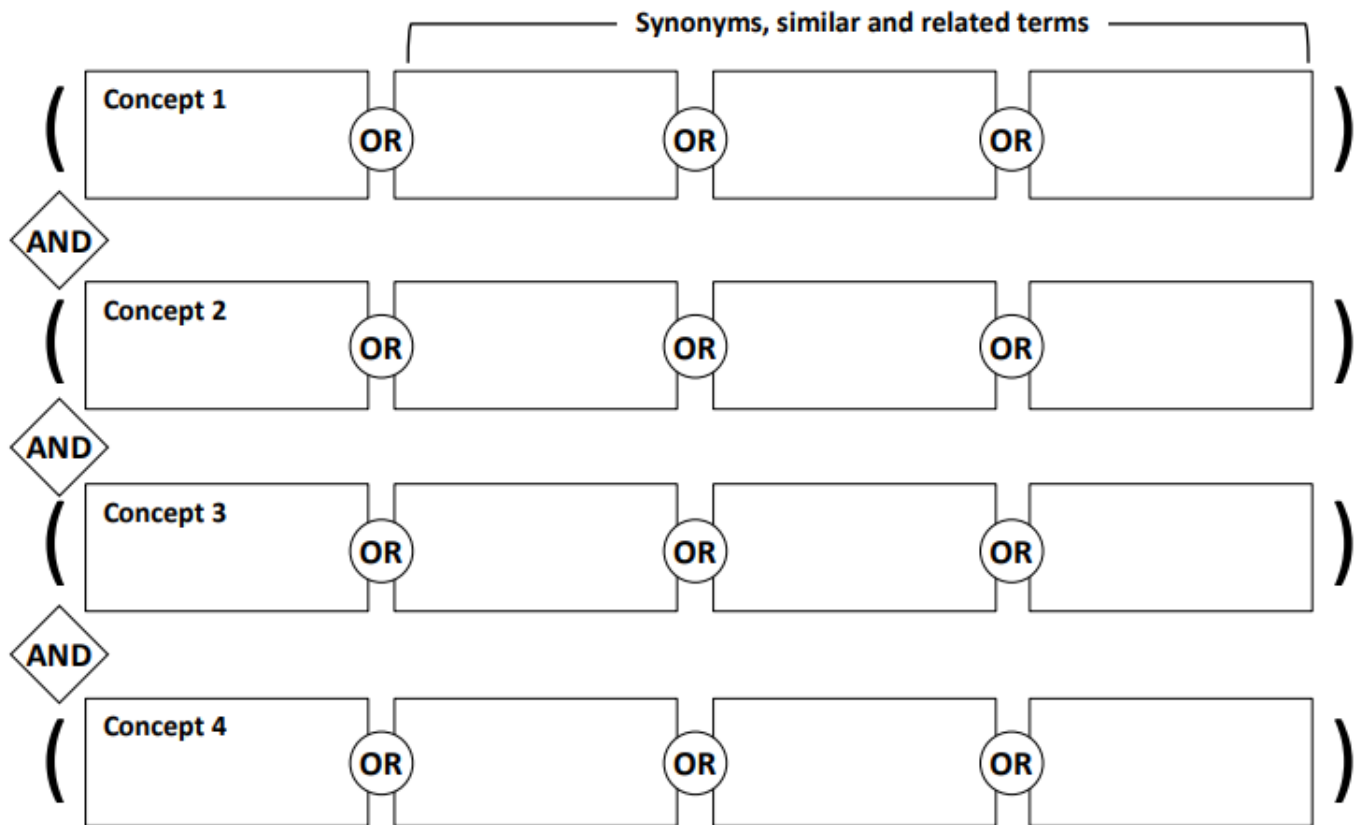
Start with a simple search in the database then review the abstracts and subject headings for many articles in order to generate a comprehensive list of search terms. Each list should consist of: author keywords (words which appear in the title/abstract of the articles) and subject (like those from a research database or the catalogue) add/subtract columns as needed.

CONCEPT 1	CONCEPT 2	CONCEPT 3	CONCEPT 4

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Step 5. Translate the above list into a single search statement.

- Search statements may vary slightly from database to database
- Combine the search terms using AND/OR and brackets ()
- Add a row (search box) for each main concept



The Search Statement Worksheet has been adapted with permission from a Search Statement Worksheet created by Evan Schilling, University of Waterloo Architecture Librarian.